

# CS300T Computers in Society

## Spring 2026 Course Syllabus

**There is no textbook. There are no exams.**

### 1. Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will have gained an increased awareness of the relative impact that technological development and the digital computer have had on society. More specifically, students will be able to:

- Examine and summarize the impact of computer technology on historical and contemporary societal issues.
- Describe the influence of digital communication and social networks.
- Analyze the impact of computer crime and fraud.
- Analyze intellectual property rights and constitutional issues in the context of historical and contemporary computer technology.
- Analyze technological reliability in the context of historical failures.
- Identify contemporary computer systems (hardware and/or software) and investigate the technological reliability in these contemporary systems.
- Describe and differentiate ethical and unethical uses of computer technology.
- Explain the fundamental importance of privacy and encryption in contemporary systems.

Course information exists as content modules in Blackboard. Students are responsible for completing these modules according to the provided schedule.

### Course Limitations

The subject area of "Computers in Society" is so vast that CS300T can do nothing more than scratch the surface. We will aim for breadth rather than depth in the course modules and for depth rather than breadth in assignments. We will strive to strike a balance between a systematic approach provided through the course documents and a current-event dominated approach for the research-oriented parts of the course.

### 2. Course Modules

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 1. History of Computers          | 9. Intellectual Property and Constitutional Issues |
| 2. History of the Internet       | 10. Reliability                                    |
| 3. Societal Issues               | 11. Professional Ethics and Responsibilities       |
| 4. Communication                 | 12. Finance and Business                           |
| 5. Privacy, Crime and Prevention | 13. Entertainment                                  |
| 6. Education                     | 14. Marketing and Trade                            |
| 7. Medicine                      |  |
| 8. Transportation                |  |

### 3. Group Assignment & Calendar

During the first week of class, each student will be assigned to a color-coded group. This assignment will be visible under the *Groups* section of Canvas. This Group designation determines the topics and deadlines for all assignments.

For each Group, the associated group calendar provides a list of all assignment deadlines.

**Please note that all Assignments are due on the listed dates no later than 11:59pm ET (GMT -05:00).**

## 4. Assignment Overview

Each major assignment corresponds to a specific Module—with the exception of the Research Paper. Review the full documentation for all assignments. **The requirements for each assignment include guidance and samples.**

### Biography Blog

The Biography Blog serves as an introductory assignment. It provides students an opportunity to introduce themselves to their colleagues. A comprehensive listing of requirements is available on Canvas under **Assignments - >Requirement Documents -> Blog Post Requirements.**

### Blog Posts

The Blog Posts are **individual** assignments. All six Blog Posts are required. A comprehensive listing of requirements is available on Canvas under **Assignments -> Requirements Documents ->Blog Post Requirements.**

### Presentation

The Presentation is an **individual** assignment. It is composed of two parts:

1. Presentation Thesis and Outline
2. Final Presentation.

All students will submit an **individual** Presentation during one of six weeks based on their Group. Each student will select a thesis that relates to the assigned Module. All Presentations must pertain to the assigned Module. **For web courses, students must include either audio or a transcript indexed to the individual slides.**

All students will submit Presentation Critiques for all presentations **including** those submitted by their group members. A comprehensive listing of requirements is available on Canvas under **Assignments -> Requirements Documents - >Presentations**

### Research Paper

The Research Paper is an **individual** assignment. It is composed of three parts:

1. Research Thesis and Outline
2. Rough Draft
3. Final Research Paper

Students will individually select a topic for the Research Paper. Students will then select a thesis and submit it for feedback. Students will submit their Rough Draft (one submission attempt) to Turnitin, a plagiarism checking tool. If the Turnitin score exceeds 25%, students are advised to evaluate the issues raised by the report. Students will submit a Final Draft, after completing any corrections.

A comprehensive listing of requirements is available on Canvas under **Assignments -> Requirements Documents - >Research Paper.**

### Extra Credit Paper (Optional)

The Extra Credit Paper is an **individual** assignment. Students may write **one** extra credit paper to receive up to 10 extra credit points. A grade of 0 will be awarded if the length is substantially below the required length. **Grades for the Extra Credit Paper will be posted during the last three weeks of the course.**

The Extra Credit Paper can be on any topic within the following modules:

- Module 1: History of Computers
- Module 2: History of the Internet
- Module 7: Medicine
- Module 8: Transportation
- Module 11: Ethics

Extra Credit Papers may be included/integrated into the Modules for future offerings of CS 300. By staying registered in the course, students agree to this use of their contributed material.

## 5. Course Grading

Individual grades can be accessed under the Grades navigation link.

All assignments will be graded within 14 days. The Extra Credit Paper and Research Paper Outline/Thesis, and Presentation Thesis are exceptions. For details see the appropriate requirements documents.

Graded Element	Points Towards Final Grade
<b>Blog Posts</b> – one introduction, six module specific	
Biography Blog Post	2
Module Blog Posts	(4 points each) 24
<b>Presentation</b>	
Thesis	2
Complete Presentation	25
<b>Presentation Critiques</b> – six critiques	(2 points each) 12
<b>Research Paper</b>	
Thesis & Outline	4
Rough Draft	1
Final Draft	30
<b>Total Points</b>	100
<b>Bonus</b> – Extra Credit Paper	10

CS 300 uses the following grading schema:

A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79

C	74-76
C-	70-73
D <sup>U</sup>	67-69
D	64-66
D-	60-63
F	0-59

With the exception of Presentation Critiques, a completed rubric will contain feedback for each assignment grade. You will be able to access the completed rubrics by visiting **Grades** and clicking on the corresponding assignment grade.

You are permitted one submission attempt per assignment. If you experience technical difficulties—e.g., an incomplete file is submitted or the file upload is unsuccessful—contact the instructor before the assignment deadline. Include the issue you experienced, CRN, and assignment—as an attachment—in your email.

## 6. Course Policies

Any assignment submission turned in after the corresponding due date will be assigned a grade of **ZERO**, unless the instructor has provided **prior permission**. Any student who fails to perform satisfactorily on the presentation or research paper may possibly not pass the course regardless of overall point total.

### Plagiarism & ODU Honor Code

All students are expected to abide by the ODU Honor Code. This means that *all* assignments are to be the exclusive work of the student. For more details on the ODU honor code, refer to the honor pledge, <https://www.odu.edu/about/mo-narchcitizenship>.

Any plagiarism will be dealt with severely with a minimum penalty of a grade of **ZERO** for the assignment. This is considered a violation of the Honor Code and could result in formal charges.

## 7. Communication

All communication must remain professional and respectful. All course related communication **MUST** be done through Canvas and ODU email. Questions and concerns will be read by the instructor and/or a teaching assistant.

## 8. Computer Competency

All students are expected to be familiar with and able to use Microsoft Office, specifically Microsoft Word and Microsoft PowerPoint. The Research Paper and Presentation must be completed using Microsoft Word and Microsoft PowerPoint, respectively. Old Dominion University provides access to Office365 for all registered students. More information can be found on the ITS home page, <https://www.odu.edu/ts/software-services/office365.html>.

### Formatting

Formatting is not preserved when content is copied between Microsoft Word and Canvas (in either direction). This is an artifact of how different software platforms handle formatting data when "Copying and Pasting" and is not unique to Canvas. In practice, you have probably encountered this before (e.g., spacing in email).

Apply formatting only in the final tool (e.g., if you are working on a Blog Post, applying formatting directly in CANVAS).

## 9. Technical Issues and Questions

Students having technical issues accessing or using certain systems should consult first the available online documentation and tutorials in Canvas. If problems persist, contact next the teaching assistants who specialize in the area of the problem before communicating with the instructor for your course section. This can be done through email or posting your questions under **Discussions > Do you have questions** -- where the instructor or students can post responses from which all students can benefit.

### Teaching Assistants

TA Information is located under **Professor & TA**. Questions concerning health and wellness in connection with course load or individual assignments should be directed to your instructor.

## 10. Educational Accessibility

Old Dominion University is committed to ensuring equal access to all qualified students with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Office of Educational Accessibility (OEA) is the campus office that works with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

- If you experience a disability which will impact your ability to access any aspect of my class, please present the instructor with an accommodation letter from OEA so that we can work together to ensure that appropriate accommodations are available to you.
- If you feel that you will experience barriers to your ability to learn and/or testing in my class but do not have an accommodation letter, please consider scheduling an appointment with OEA to determine if academic accommodations are necessary.

The Office of Educational Accessibility is located at 1021 Student Success Center and their phone number is (757) 683-4655. Additional information is available at the OEA website: <http://www.odu.edu/educationalaccessibility/>

Students are encouraged to self-disclose disabilities that have been verified by the Office of Educational Accessibility by providing Accommodation Letters to their instructors early in the semester in order to start receiving accommodations. Accommodations will not be made until the Accommodation Letters are provided to instructors each semester.